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SUMMARY OF RUMANIAN WORKERS PARTY JOURNAL, APRIL 1956Editorial

The theme of the editorial (pages 3-14) in the April 1956 issue of Lupta de Clasa is Leninism.

In a brief introduction, the editorial recalls Lenin's "infallible dicta" concerning the "inevitable putrescence of capitalism" once it has reached its final stage of "economic monopolism and political imperialism." However, Lenin further taught, according to the editorial, that this process develops unevenly in different countries and that in the meantime, peaceful coexistence between countries belonging to the rival camps of socialism and capitalism is both possible and necessary. The editorial notes that the only threat to peace has of course come from the imperialist countries, but it adds reassuringly that today the danger is very small, "for, as the 20th Congress of the CPSU has pointed out, the camp of peace has become so powerful that the aggressive tendencies of imperialism can be successfully curbed, provided the forces of peace exercise due vigilance."

Another fundamental truth developed by Lenin is, according to Lupta de Clasa, that the new social and economic order can only be built on the basis of the utmost expansion of heavy industry, the socialization of agriculture, and a cultural revolution. However, if it be true that only one road leads to socialism, this applies only to the essentials, many variations in unessential matters being perfectly conceivable. China and Yugoslavia are mentioned as countries having contributed specific elements of their own to the building of socialism.

As for Rumania, the editorial is content to claim that Leninism is being applied "creatively," in accordance with the country's peculiarities. To illustrate such "creativity" in industry, the editorial cites specialization of production in those branches for which Rumania possesses the raw materials and the experience, that is, in the petroleum, chemical, power, steel, coal, and nonferrous-metals industries, made possible by the coordination of the 5-year plans of the socialist countries.

Regarding "creativity" in agriculture, the editorial mentions toleration of private property, which will become public property only by means of voluntary collectivization; encouragement of inferior forms of cooperation, such as mutual assistance groups, associations, and cooperative sheepfolds; and the official blessing given to peculiar local customs. It points with pride to the encouragement given in Galati Regiune, despite considerable opposition from "shortsighted" party and government officials who could find no justification for it in the Marxist-Leninist classics, to the traditional practice of farming a number of small holdings as one large field, which proved to be a valuable step toward ultimate collectivization. Among other innovations, previously approved in the report of the Central Committee to the Second Congress of the PMR (Partidul Muncitoresc Romin, Rumanian Workers Party), the editorial mentions the practice which had grown up in many agricultural associations of allocating income according both to work performed and to the amount of land brought in. This practice too had been mistakenly opposed by many party and government officials, the editorial says.

In a nutshell, the editorial states, the acid test of any social or economic policy is whether it leads to the substitution of socialist relationships of collaboration among men for capitalist exploitation of man. Any changes leading to the former goal constitute scientific socialism, while changes which may improve, but fail to do away with, capitalist relationships of production constitute reformism.

STAT

The last part of the editorial deals with Lenin's teachings on party democracy and the cult of personality. The editorial recalls that the 20th Congress of the CPSU emphasized Stalin's great achievements for the good of the party, of the Soviet workers, and of the international labor movement, while strongly condemning the cult of personality as practiced by him toward the end of his life, and that the congress had charged the Central Committee with the task of re-establishing the correct norms of party life as laid down by Lenin.

In Rumania too, Lupta de Clasa admits, the cult of Stalin's personality has been widely practiced, a mistake which was freely acknowledged in the meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee of the PNR in March 1956. Moreover, Gheorghiu-Dej himself, in the report he presented to the 20th Congress on behalf of the Rumanian delegation, had not concealed the fact that the propagation of the cult of personality had affected party activity in Rumania. The editorial does not make it clear whether the "personality" referred to was Gheorghiu-Dej's own or Stalin's.

But, the editorial hastens to add, as far back as in August 1953, the Central Committee of the PNR enjoined members to eradicate this blemish. Much has been achieved since then, the editorial asserts, but, as was pointed out by the Second Congress of the PNR, there is still work to be done in this field and strict recommendations to that effect were issued by the March 1956 Plenum. True Leninism, it says, means full discussion and frank criticism, but also "iron discipline of the party of the proletariat, especially during its period of dictatorship," as Lenin taught.

The Popular Front

Celebration of the socialist 1 May holiday offers Lupta de Clasa an opportunity to make some propaganda for world-wide popular fronts. As the author of the unsigned article (pages 17-25) can hardly have any illusions as to the number of his foreign readers, and as a popular front has already been achieved in Rumania, the object of the article is presumably to bolster the morale of native Communists and to discourage opponents of the regime.

The author finds considerable encouragement for the advocates of collaboration between Communist, socialist, and even some leftist bourgeois parties in a number of recent events, such as French official criticism of US policy on disarmament, the opposition of the Icelanders to the presence of US forces, and a number of statements by socialist leaders in Belgium, France, West Germany, etc., indicating willingness to collaborate with the Communist party.

What is more, hopeful signs can be detected, according to Lupta de Clasa, in such powerful groups as the recently merged AFL/CIO, with 16 million members -- "although unfortunately led by reformists" -- and the British trade unions, which have strongly protested against German rearmament. These two groups, the author says, directly control the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, with a membership of 5,525,000, with whom, he believes, means of concrete collaboration must be found. The same is true, he thinks, of numerous other organizations struggling for democratic liberties and workers' rights. In short, he is positive that a new and most promising chapter in the history of workers' unity has already begun.

However, these dazzling prospects for the ultimate world-wide triumph of Communism should apparently not tempt Rumanian workers to forget the necessities of the present. In the second part of his article, the anonymous author reminds them of their bounden duty not only to fulfill, but to overfulfill in honor of 1 May, the norms laid down in the Second Five-Year Plan. To assist them in this task, he recapitulates the main provisions of the plan, as well as the approved methods for increasing production by raising labor productivity.

STAT

The article ends with an asseveration of Rumania's deep interest in developing close economic, scientific, cultural, and sporting ties with other countries.

Some Timely Ideas of Lenin's

Publication of the Rumanian translation of Volume 29 of Lenin's works gives M. Cernea an opportunity to develop (pages 27-33) the "Back to Leninism" slogan adopted by the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

Cernea quotes passages from the volume, which covers the March-August 1919 period, in support of the "different roads to socialism" principle, as exemplified by the road followed by that "eminent militant of the worker movement, Bela Kun."

According to the author, abundant proof is to be found in Lenin's writings, that Marxism never taught that it could only be achieved by violence. The truth, he asserts, is that the proletariat resorts to violence only when forced by the opposition of the exploiting classes, the proletariat never provoking class war "artificially." This is said to be proved by the October Revolution, "the least bloody of the great revolutions."

The 20th Soviet Party Congress has drawn the correct conclusion, Cernea writes, that since World War II, there exists in some capitalist countries the possibility of achieving socialism by parliamentary methods. In others, however, he admits that a violent class struggle will be inevitable, for there capitalism is strong enough to oppose the will of the workers by force. Hence, the decision whether the revolution is to violent or peaceful will be made by the exploiting classes, not by the proletariat.

According to Lenin, therefore, violence is only a necessary evil which may have to be used under certain circumstances during and after the struggle for the seizure of power, for Lenin always taught, Cernea writes, that the "principal essence" of the proletarian dictatorship is not violence, but the capture of power for the building of socialism. "Absolutely essential" for the achievement of socialism, the author asserts, is the raising of labor productivity. The justification of socialism is to be found precisely in its ability to outproduce capitalism, not only in industry, but also in agriculture. In this connection, the author devotes considerable space to Lenin's warnings against forcible methods of farm collectivization.

Indeed, the article concludes, Lenin always emphasized that socialism cannot be victorious without the support of the masses of workers and peasants. That support cannot be won by laws, decrees, and orders only. In addition an indefatigable work of education and persuasion is indispensable. Profound study of Volume 29 of Lenin's works is strongly recommended to Rumanian propagandists who want to do their job properly.

The Rumanian Petroleum Industry

The article (pages 40-52) on the petroleum industry contributed by Ion Dumitru, Minister of the Petroleum Industry, represents, generally speaking, little more than a recapitulation of the industry's achievements and shortcomings during the last 5 years, as well as a paraphrase of the directives promulgated by the Second Party Congress for the next quinquennium, all of which material has already been published elsewhere. However, the article contains a few statements which are worth mentioning:

The minister restates the fact that petroleum production in 1955 exceeded the planned amount by about 600,000 tons, but a few pages further on he states that the planned work speed was not attained, as a result of poor organization,

STAT

of avoidable mechanical breakdowns, and of complications in the drilling sector, causing a 32.2-percent loss of "productive time." No explanation of these apparently contradictory statements is given by the minister. In another place, he also complains that the cost of oil extraction has exceeded the amount planned, and instead of diminishing, has grown from year to year. This might have indicated, in connection with the above contradiction, that, although drilling was slower, more highly productive wells were drilled. But this explanation is ruled out by the fact that he attributes the higher cost to the drilling of dry wells, unnecessary shipment of oil by tank car instead of pipeline, general wastefulness, and lower-than-planned work speed. The only explanation for the above-plan output would seem to be that the flow of oil was more abundant than expected.

Speaking of the increased oil production figures set in the Second Five-Year Plan, the minister mentions considerable capital investments, including the complete re-equipment of 40 percent of the drilling offices. But like his colleagues in the government and party, he seems to rely chiefly on a psychological revolution in the petroleum industry personnel to achieve the plan goal. Drillers and foremen are expected to strive voluntarily to improve their skills, engineers and management to adopt new techniques eagerly, to organize operations conscientiously and thoughtfully, to weigh every expense carefully, to check quality and maintenance of parts and equipment meticulously, etc. At any rate, Dumitru ends his article with the confident statement that the Romanian oil workers are firmly decided to chalk up further considerable achievements by 1960.

Collectivization of Agriculture

If anyone still clings to the illusion that the small-goods production and the private capitalist sectors of the economy still extant in Rumania have a chance of survival, the article (pages 53-69) on farm collectivization by Stefan Voicu, alternate member of the Central Committee of the PMR, should disabuse him. The workers and their peasant allies seized power, Voicu asserts, to create not a heterogeneous economy, but a homogeneous socialist state in which there is no room for relationships generating capital and exploiters. However, he adds, the immediate requirements of socialism can be considered satisfied by the achievement of the target set by the Second Five-Year Plan, that is, production of 60-70 percent of farm produce by the socialized sector of agriculture. The rest can follow later.

By the end of 1955, Voicu writes, the socialist sector of agriculture encompassed 35 percent of the country's agricultural land, with state farms covering 25.5 percent of the country's agricultural land, and collective farms and agricultural associations only less than 10 percent. Only 14 percent of the peasant families belonged to collective farms, agricultural associations, or temporary associations. During the first quarter of 1956, 133,000 families joined the two former types, but Voicu is far from satisfied with the rate of progress achieved so far. It is true, he writes, that total grain production in 1955 exceeded the "bourgeois" record by 30 percent, but that is still not sufficient to satisfy the needs of a fast-growing population and expanding industry. Small-scale farming can increase its production only to a very limited extent, in spite of all the assistance it may get from MTS and in the form of credits. The only solution lies in large-scale farming, but, Voicu is careful to point out, not under private ownership. Another good reason adduced by the author for dooming small-scale farming is the waste of labor which can only be employed at certain periods of the year, while industry badly needs additional labor the whole year round.

However, the author is at pains to emphasize, on no account must any pressure on the peasants be used. They must be induced to join voluntarily by the good example of flourishing collectives already in existence, or by skillful encouragement of the traditional forms of mutual assistance among poorer peasants,

STAT

which have lately shown a pronounced tendency to spread. These foster the co-operative spirit, and promote the joining of small plots, which can then be worked mechanically. Collectivization in Rumania, Voicu argues, would have progressed much more rapidly if, as recommended by the Second Party Congress, those in authority had imaginatively encouraged all forms of local cooperation instead of remaining the prisoners of schematism.

In the following section of his study, the author quotes the findings of study teams (*echipe monografice*) of the General Directorate of Statistics, made apparently about 1954, which showed that, in the villages investigated by them, at any rate, the percentage of medium peasants had increased, and the percentage of small peasants, decreased, to a much greater extent than appears from the data contained in the activity report of the Central Committee to the Second Party Congress. The report was, of course, based on the official figures supplied by the local people's councils, but, Voicu says, the study teams found them highly inaccurate. For example, in the village of Sepreus, Oradea Regiune, the official register showed 51.9 percent small peasants and 37.7 percent medium peasants, whereas actually, in 1954 there were only 37.7 percent small peasants, but 52.2 percent medium peasants.

The numerical discrepancies are explained by the author as being the result of bureaucratic incompetence; but as for the social and economic causes of this trend toward an increase in the number of medium peasants, the only explanation vouchsafed is that they are "a peculiarity in the development of individual farms under a people's democracy, a manifestation of the influence of the fundamental law of socialism within the sector of small-scale goods production."

The study team, Voicu writes, also found that in Sepreus, of 23 kulak farms existing in 1938, only 8 survived in 1954, 15 having joined the ranks of medium farms, while 6 medium farms had become kulak farms. Voicu admits that it cannot be asserted that the trend is the same in all villages, but the evolution in Sepreus supports the belief, he thinks, that in the present transitional period, more kulaks are being eliminated than are being created by the private sector of the economy. This, the author considers, is a striking confirmation of the conclusion reached by the 23 March 1956 Plenum of the Central Committee of the PMR that the thesis according to which the class war increased in sharpness as socialization progressed, was false and "had done the party political harm." Voicu does not explain, however, why the findings of the study teams were kept secret for 2 years, that is until after the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

The above example of official concealment of the facts at the highest levels, does not prevent Voicu from concluding his article with a sharp criticism of propagandists and social science teachers "who are all too frequently unacquainted with the facts and the concrete problems of life." They are quite right when they describe the agricultural collectivization process in the USSR in great detail, but they are completely wrong when they fail to discuss "creatively" the application of this "brilliant experiment," as well as of experiences the People's Democracies, to Rumanian conditions. Voicu quotes, among other proofs, two 36-page lectures on agriculture collectivization given at the Bucharest Polytechnic Institute, only 2 pages of which dealt with Rumania. A large part of the blame for such shortcomings, Voicu feels, can be laid on Stalin's cult of personality, but not all of it. Many teachers and propagandists are too indolent to visit the villages themselves, and on the other hand, not only does the General Directorate of Statistics have quite inadequate data on the rural economy, but even these are not made available on a satisfactory basis to scientists, teachers, etc. The Institute of Economic Research of the Rumanian Academy and the Rural Economy Section of the Agronomic Research Institute are equally guilty for having failed to study the problems in sufficient detail and to make whatever material exists available to researchers.

STAT

In conclusion, Voicu says, that the remedy for the harm done by Stalinism is simple: Firmness in Leninist principles, flexibility in their application.

The Role of the Press in the Economic Field

Under the title "The Press Must Strengthen its Role of Collective Organizer and Manifest Greater Combativeness in the Economic Field" (pages 70-77), V. Pop elaborates on the criticisms of the press voiced at the Second Party Congress.

The author quotes a passage from a circular letter sent by the Central Committee of the PMR and the Council of Ministers to party organizations, people's councils, etc., in which the duty of the press is described as being not only to inform the public and to urge everyone to fulfill his task, but also to "do a concrete organizational job for the translation into fact of assignments, to fight for the realization of party policy, to permanently keep its eye on the activities of party organizations, of state and economic organs, and of mass organizations, at all levels."

The author concedes that the newspapers, particularly Munca, have grasped the transcendental importance of increasing labor productivity and reducing production costs by means of fuller utilization of machinery, adoption of the latest techniques, use of labor-saving machines, use of "internal production reserves," etc., but he chides them for dealing more in generalities than in specific and specific and concrete facts. As an example of what he means he mentions an editorial in România Libera of 8 February 1956 on the evils of "shock tactics," in which only one concrete example is given, and that one dating back to the preceding year.

Other faults of omission criticized by the author are failure to campaign against the inadequate utilization of drill rigs in the petroleum industry and of tractors in the lumber industry, and the inadequate attention paid to labor discipline, to waste of materials, to excessive demurrage fees, to the problems of the consumer goods industries in general, to socialist competition, to agricultural collectivization, to seasonal agricultural campaigns, to MFS, etc. When the papers did take up these subjects, Pop charges, they concentrated for a time on one problem and completely neglected the others. However, the author recognizes that there are exceptions: Flamura Prahovei (Floesti), Scinteia (Bucharest), and Steagul Rosu (Bucharest) are commended for good work in certain fields.

In the last paragraphs of his article, the author deprecates the general tendency of the press to feature successes and to remain silent about failures. Even more rare are articles in which the causes of failures are competently analyzed, or central government departments and party organs are criticized. The excuse given by newspapermen is that in these cases facts have to be carefully checked, and that takes time; but this excuse is rejected by the author. The press simply must do its duty as watchdog and at the same time carefully document its criticisms. It is up to the press to find the solution. It is also up to the press, the author concludes, to show greater courage and perseverance when government or party organs "forget" to reply to critical articles. Such an attitude on the part of high government and party officials is termed by the author absolutely inadmissible.

From "Party Work Practice"

The topic of this section this month is how base organizations should proceed in order to recruit an adequate number of new party members of the right sort. C. Anca, First Secretary of the Floesti City Party Committee, who has apparently acquitted himself of this task successfully, explains in this article (pages 101-110) the methods he used and the principles he was guided by.

STAT

Topical Subjects

This section (pages 116-122) discusses the meetings held recently by base organizations of the Union of Working Youth for the purpose of hearing their officers' reports on past activity and of electing new officers. The section also deals with the duty of party organizations to study the decisions of the Second PMR Congress and of the 20th CPSU Congress. A list is included of "essential" problems to be studied, among which farm collectivization is stated to be the chief task of party organizations for the next 5 years, and increased productivity of socialist enterprises is singled out as "important."

Letters From Readers

This section (pages 126-128) contains, among other letters, one from the Faculty of Political Economy of the Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej Railroad Institute, in which the members suggest that the teaching program be changed in the future. "It is not right," the faculty writes, "that our lectures ... should mainly teach the history of the economy of the USSR, to which the specifically Romanian problems form a mere appendix, according to the formula '... in Romania too' instead of things being the other way round...."

Other Articles

This issue of Lupta de Clasa also contains an article (pages 78-100) on the postwar capitalist economy by E. Varga, translated from Kommunist, No 4, 1956.

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